



## News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Utah Anti-tobacco Advocates Mark 40 Years Since the First U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Tobacco**

(Salt Lake City, UT) – On January 11, 1964 Luther L. Terry, M.D. released the first report of the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health. This landmark document was America's first widely publicized official recognition that cigarette smoking causes cancer and other serious diseases. Representatives from public health, non-profit, anti-tobacco advocacy and medical organizations met on Jan. 9, 2004 at the Utah State Historical Society to review the 40-year fight.

Dr. Joseph L. Hatch, former president of the Utah Medical Association and the Salt Lake County Medical Society said that the 1964 report served as a springboard for legislative and public health initiatives over the past 40 years which have significantly reduced the number of deaths due to lung cancer, emphysema and other diseases linked to tobacco use.

In 1964, 42.2 percent of U.S. adults smoked. Up until that time, the tobacco industry had full reign in advertising its products as glamorous, socially acceptable and even healthful. Now after a 40-year effort by public health, the medical community and allied organizations, the Centers for Disease Control reports that 22.8 percent of adults were current smokers in 2001. Utah's own tobacco prevention efforts have resulted in the state being one of only two states showing a linear decrease in smoking since 1996.

"Anti-smoking efforts have been a major public health success," said Hatch. "About 48 million American adults still smoke, but approximately 42 million more would have smoked without the important prevention programs that have developed and grown over the past 40 years. This is significant considering the addictive nature of tobacco and powerful marketing efforts to promote its use."

Beverly May, regional director of the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids cited many significant legislative initiatives that occurred after 1964 to counter the tobacco industry's marketing efforts such as:

- 1966, Congress required the tobacco industry to put warning labels on cigarette packaging.
- Congress passed the Cigarette Act of 1969, removing all tobacco advertising on radio and TV.

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- 1971, Cigarette manufacturers agreed to place health warnings on cigarette advertisements.
- 1988, Smoking was banned on domestic flights of less than two hours.

Utah lawmakers also took significant steps to keep tobacco products away from teens and to create a smoke-free environment by passing specific legislation:

- 1989, HB51 prohibited the free distribution of cigarettes in Utah to anyone.
- 1989, HB53 prohibited vending machines in all public places except bars and private clubs and prohibited smoking on public school property.
- 1994, HB50 passed prohibiting smoking in all public places except bars, private clubs and sections in the SL International Airport.

Heather Borski, Utah Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, said the anti-tobacco effort has become increasingly more sophisticated. With funds from the master tobacco settlement agreement, Utah has created an infrastructure with state and local health departments and community groups to run successful prevention and quitting programs including: the Utah Tobacco Quit Lines, Utah QuitNet, retailer education and compliance efforts, and school and community outreach. “The Truth media campaign has reached special audiences with prevention and quitting information, including pregnant women, Native Americans, Hispanics, labor unions and college students.”

According to Borski, a new Truth Campaign educational ad is debuting this month to remind Utah motorists of the devastating effects of tobacco use. A new electronic billboard will begin counting the number of tobacco-related deaths that occur each day, starting in January, and ending in December 2004. Every 71.7 seconds the billboard will add another death from tobacco use. Each morning, commuters will see the dramatic death toll change from the day before.

Borski thanked all those who have been a part of the progress that has been made over the past 40 years. “Together we have made many great changes, and prevented countless people suffering from tobacco-related illness and death, but there is still more to be done,” said Borski. “We must remain vigilant. The tobacco industry continues to pour millions of dollars each year into Utah alone to market its deadly products. Tobacco continues to kill 440,000 people per year in the U.S., more than AIDS, automobile deaths, suicide, homicide, and drug and alcohol abuse combined.”

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.*